

CHALLENGE



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Los Angeles

Smash racist deportations— Working people have no nations!

LOS ANGELES, February 15—The latest fascist raid triggered an emergency rally where 100 antiracists blocked a Homeland security van from accessing the Metropolitan Detention Center. Protesters called for an end to deportations and for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to get out of Los Angeles; Progressive Labor Party called for a borderless world.

The rally turned into a picket around the building, from the entrance to the side where detainees are locked up. The chants of “hey hey ho ho deportations have got to go” and “ICE must go” got louder and more militant as the crowd grew stronger.

As a Homeland Security van pulled up, protesters immediately surrounded the van, waving signs and chanting. Two Homeland Security officers came out briefly and approached the van but quickly returned to the detention center. Protesters surrounded the van for two hours until police in riot gear responded and dispersed the crowd.

This protest was in response to the ICE raids in Southern California. ICE kkkops arrested 212 workers over a five-day period and issued 122 notices of inspection to businesses in the area.

No sanctuary in the Democrats camp

This week brought a significant uptick in terror for immigrant communities here after another round of raids. While ICE agents claimed to only target specific individuals with criminal records, we know that is just a cover for terrorizing entire communities of workers.

California is listed as one of only six sanctuary states in the country. There are statewide regulations to obstruct federal immigration kkkops and their ability to question and detain undocumented immigrants. Los Angeles Democratic mayor Eric Garcetti doubled down on this position last year. Masses of students were walking out of Los Angeles high schools after Trump’s election to protest the attacks on immigrants. Garcetti was pressured by these mass demonstrations to “take a stand.”

Upon a closer look at the role of Democrats, they are far from “immigrant friendly.” When we include the number of returns (when an immigrant is coerced into an informal deportation without a court hearing), the Clinton administration deported 12.3 million immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 1/26/17). Obama earned the title Deportation-in-Chief because he shifted policy from returns to removals, thus criminalizing (A removal is a court-mandated deportation and criminalization of any attempt to come back to the U.S. for a number of years). “The story of the Obama administration on immigration enforcement is that more people than ever are being expelled from the country in a



way that prevents them from returning to the U.S. legally or illegally” than all other presidents combined (Vox, 4/11/14). In total, Obama deported 5.3 million immigrants.

While Trump deported fewer workers than Obama did in his first year (Economist, 12/4/17), immigrant communities feel no less terrorized. Deportations have become more random and aggressive.

While Garcetti and other Democratic mayors appear to be standing up to ICE, the only standard they really uphold is requiring a warrant. Once that paper is produced, protection for immigrants is quickly abandoned. The Democrats who supposedly back the Dreamers (undocumented youth) actually promote a 10-to-12 year path to immigration that can be rescinded at any time. Furthermore, the main bill also includes up to \$25 billion increase in funding for ICE and more border militarization.

Rally politics

At the rally, there were some class-conscious chants. But, most of the anger was focused on ICE and the Trump administration. There were also claims that Sanctuary cities and states were being targeted for raids since law enforcement would

not cooperate with ICE. Besides calling for all of us to bring out friends, coworkers, and family to the next rally, the main call of the rally leaders was to get president Trump and vice president Mike Pence out of office and pass immigration reform.

Unfortunately, the open fascism of the Trump administration has many well-meaning working-class sisters and brothers running into the arms of the Democrats. This is a dead-end for immigrant workers and youth.

While rejecting republicrats, we struggle for the understanding that we must stand up to fascism in whatever form it rears its ugly head—promptly and militantly.

The 100 workers who protested need the Progressive Labor Party and communism. What they are searching for, a world free from racist terror, will not be found within this rotten system of capitalism. Through long-term struggle in the mass movement for immigrant rights, we can fight for the idea that raids, police murder, mass incarceration are all forms of terror against the working class. They are propagated by both Democrats and Republicans alike. Fascism, in all its forms, will only be smashed with communist revolution.✊

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

Syria and Iran, flashpoint for next world war?

On February 10, in response to an alleged Iranian drone flight over Israeli territory, an Israeli F-16 jet was shot down while bombing a region in Syria occupied by Iran, the first time an Israeli warplane has been lost in combat since 1982. The incident sparked the largest Israeli air raid on Syria in decades, with both Syrian and Iranian military installations being targeted. As Russian imperialism strengthens both its foothold in Syria and its alliance with Iran, this flashpoint in the Syrian war signals the possibility of broader conflict between an expansive Russia and a U.S. empire in decline.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has openly called for regime change in Iran for its human rights abuses (though he’s said nothing about the indiscriminate bombing and slaughter in Yemen by U.S. ally Saudi Arabia). Trump has vowed to bail out of the Iran nuclear deal in May and reintroduce sanctions unless the multilateral agreement is renegotiated (independent.co.uk, 1/12). In a recent Op-Ed column in the New York Times, Nikki Haley, Trump’s ambassador to the United Nations, warned that unless Iran’s export of non-nuclear ballistic missiles to Yemen’s Houthi rebels is stopped, “then someday soon ... the chance for peace will be lost” (2/17). At the Munich Security Conference, National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster appealed to U.S. allies to halt trade with Iran to stem Iran’s funding of proxy armies and militias in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq: “So the time is now, we think, to act against Iran” (Reuters.com, 2/17).

The U.S. bosses have yet to galvanize popular support at home for another ground war in the Middle East, much less a global conflict with Russia and/or China. But their accelerating strategic weakness and the unpredictability of external events could push them to move before they are ready.

Scramble for Syria

Following the attack, the U.S. condemned Syria and affirmed Israel’s right to defend itself. Even so, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ceased the air barrage after Russian President Vladimir Putin called and warned him “to avoid a course of action that could have ‘dangerous consequences for the region’” (Daily Mail, 2/12). For now, Russia, not the U.S., is calling the shots in Syria.

Since 2011, Syria’s civil war has widened into a proxy war for the superpowers vying for control over the oil-rich Middle East. The latest Israeli attacks are part of a protracted regional conflict dating back to 1967, when Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria during the Six-Day War. Over the past five years, Israel has launched over 100 air strikes inside Syria, often attacking Iranian forces (Washington Post, 9/7/17). As Iran further entrenches itself in Syria and along the Israeli border, escalation toward global conflict is ever more likely. Russia is standing squarely behind Iran, the second most populous country and third biggest oil producer in the Middle East. The U.S. will stop at nothing to protect its interests in Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest oil producer and Iran’s main regional rival.

More than a century ago, Lenin argued that the world had entered the age of imperialism. With no new colonies to “discover” and subjugate, the imperialist powers could only re-divide territory and resources through war. In the current inter-imperialist scramble, Syria is at the epicenter of a re-division of the Middle East.

Now that ISIS is largely defeated in Syria, the conflict there has devolved into a free-for-all of imperialists competing to expand their influence in the region. With the Iran-leaning Syrian president Bashar al-Assad once again entrenched in power, and Russian and Chinese bosses positioning themselves to exploit the Syrian nightmare, the U.S. bosses seem more and more likely to find themselves on the losing side.

Insecure rulers debate Iran tactics

For the U.S. capitalist ruling class, the threats posed by a crisis with Iran are potentially catastrophic. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a ruling-class think tank, pointed out:

History of U.S.-Iran-Israel alliance

In the years following World War II, at the height of U.S. imperialist dominance, the U.S. could exert its influence through a combination of financial pressure, military might, and CIA espionage and assassinations. In 1953, the U.S. backed a coup in Iran that brought the murderous Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi into power, a move made possible in part by a worldwide boycott of Iranian oil instigated by Britain. At the time, Iranian oil could easily be replaced by oil from other places.

Through much of the Cold War, Iran and Israel were the two pillars of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East. But in the 1970s, with the growing power of OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), once a reliable U.S. ally, Iran began exercising greater independence of U.S. dictates. Now Iranian oil was no longer so easily replaceable, and the 1973 oil crisis revealed that the old equation for U.S. imperialist dominance in the Middle East was no longer reliable. After the Iranian Revolution of 1979 replaced the Shah with an Islamic Republic, Iran switched from U.S. ally to adversary—and eventually opened the door to Russia and China. Meanwhile, as the US continues to lose ground in the region, Israel has increasingly been left to fend for itself.

Iran has the ability to trigger a major war in the region, and to threaten the world’s main source of oil and gas exports—the 17 million barrels of oil a day that flow through the Strait of Hormuz. Any such Iranian action threatens the stability of the entire global economy, the global (and U.S. domestic) price of oil and of transportation fuels, and the import and export capabilities of America’s key trading partners in Asia—more than a third of U.S. manufactured imports (CSIS, 1/10).

The U.S. bosses’ main concern in Syria is the growing sway of Iranian and Russian imperialism in the region. Despite spending trillions on two wars in Iraq and an ongoing war in Afghanistan that has led thousands of U.S. workers to their deaths and killed millions in the Middle East, U.S. bosses have seen their influence in the region continue to wane. James F. Jeffrey, former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and Iraq, highlighted the rulers’ dilemma: “We told the Turks that the Kurds were temporary...to defeat ISIS. Now we need them to contain Iran. The whole purpose of this is to split the Russians from the Syrians by saying we’re going to stay on to force a political solution in Syria” (New York Times, 1/22).

The U.S. rulers’ concern is that a unilateral U.S. military confrontation with Iran would require a massive infusion of U.S. troops and further destabilize the region. Some main-wing ruling-class voices inside the Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institute, notably author Vali Nasr, are pushing for an inclusive, U.S.-led regional order—including Iran—to counter Russia:

Rather than...contain Iran, the United States... should convince Tehran that it would be better off working with Washington and its allies than investing its hopes in a Russian-backed regional order...the United States should do what the Obama administration failed to: lead an international diplomatic effort to broker a regional deal that would end conflicts and create a framework for peace and stability (Foreign Affairs, March/April issue).

But others in the CFR, including Iran hardliner Eliot Abrams, are emphasizing the limits of diplomacy and the need for war. Abrams urged the Donald Trump administration to consider that Israel “could be a decade away from a situation where Iran has nuclear weapons and has bases in Syria—and could logically therefore even place nuclear weapons in Syria, just

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Students & PSC community continue to fight racism

BROOKLYN, February 20—Students at Park Slope Collegiate, an integrated school with a principled stance against racist inequalities, staged two sit-ins against the racist Department of Education, the capitalist news media, and a few DoE stooges among PSC staff members. These militant actions capped nearly a year of multiracial struggle by students, parents, and teachers against anti-communist attacks over the past year.

Students reject racism of bosses

Last August, after a five-month witch-hunt, the DoE's Office of Special Investigations retreated and suspended its inquiry without imposing any penalties. Along the way, the OSI did its worst to intimidate the school community, sow internal distrust, and undermine PSC's anti-racist mission. It brought charges of "communist organizing" against two administrators and three staff members, and abused eight PSC students (one as young as 13) by interrogating them without their parents' knowledge. Even after the investigation closed, the DoE and its racist, anti-student accomplices at the United Federation of Teachers continued for months to harass the school's anti-racist leaders.

The sit-ins were a direct response to this harassment. These students, with strong support from a multiracial group of parents, are refusing to accept their racist criminalization by the DoE, the UFT, and the media—and giving notice that they are ready and willing to fight back.

A force to be reckoned with

No less important, the PSC community has actively rejected the pseudo-science of race. Confounding the racists, a mass, multiracial group of youth and their families are choosing to fight racism in solidarity with communists. Many white parents now realize that fighting racism is in the interest of the whole working class.

Reform struggles, win or lose, can be schools for revolution. When communists in Progressive Labor Party both give and accept leadership in these fights, we gain confidence in our class's ability to defeat the bosses and smash capitalism, the source of racism, sexism, and inequality. These small struggles can lead to profound changes in the individuals who join them. By revealing the contradictions of the profit system, exposing our class enemies, and building multiracial unity in the face of the rulers' attempts to divide us, these struggles can be instrumental in building a revolutionary communist movement.

In this instance, at least for now, a reform struggle has been won. Here are some recent developments at PSC that remind us that the bosses are not invincible, and that a united working class is a force to be reckoned with:

- At two January meetings, more than 50 students, parents, and staff confronted DoE lackeys for Mayor Bill de Blasio, who is bought and paid for by gentrifying real estate interests, and his segregationist chancellor, Carmen Fa-

rina. After more than four years in office, their administration has done nothing beyond lip service to integrate one of the most segregated big-city school systems in the country. After a New York Daily News article demonized a group of mainly Black students, giving credence to the lie that a private group chat posed a physical threat to a racist PSC teacher, angry parents forced District Superintendent Michael Prayor to come to the school to meet with them. Prayor, a Farina henchman who collaborated in the abusive student interrogation last spring, tried to mollify the group with empty reassurances that the DoE was on the school's side. But the group wasn't fooled, and repeatedly called Prayer out for his complicity in a racist system. People demanded an explanation for why the DoE protects racists and attacks anti-racists, and a commitment to end the DoE's harassment. A number of white parents were particularly outspoken in defense of the Black students defamed by the Daily News—an unusual and powerful demonstration of multiracial unity.

- Fed up with disruptive investigations by the UFT after spurious complaints by a racist teacher who'd served for years as the union's chapter chair, the school's faculty booted the teacher out of office in a recall vote. The tally was 43 to 10 against the racist—and in favor of

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Anti-sexism study group leads to mass anti-sexist action

Black women key to class struggle & revolution

The bourgeoisie is fearful of the militancy of the [Black] woman, and for good reason. The capitalists know, far better than many progressives seem to know, that once Negro women begin to take action, the militancy of the whole [Black] people, and thus of the anti-imperialist coalition, is greatly enhanced. Viewed in this light, it is not accidental that the American bourgeoisie has intensified its oppression, not only of the [Black] people in general, but of [Black] women in particular.

—Claudia Jones

CHICAGO, February 20—A Progressive Labor Party study group about sexism led to a mass anti-sexist action of supporting nursing home workers on strike. Both study and action affirmed the line that Black women leadership is key to communist revolution.

To create a fighting communist Party, theory needs to lead to practice, and that practice needs to influence future theory. Comrades and friends here have been holding a study group about the roots of sexism and the history of struggle against it. Our goal is to win more workers to the truth that capitalism has no solution for sexism and exploitation. Only mass international communist revolution can abolish the inequality that class society creates between women and men.

Anti-sexism study group

In the first study group, we focused on former Communist Party USA member Angela Davis. This proved to be a good decision; it gave some historical background on the struggle of the 1960s and 1970s. We analyzed how anti-capitalist messages and actions from radicals have over time been completely diluted as these same "militants" made more and more compromises with capitalism.

In the case of Angela Davis, study group participants noted how her speech at the last year's Women's March, Davis used the term "resistance" a dozen times, versus using the term "capitalism" only once. Angela Davis years ago accepted a position at University of California, Santa Cruz and Rutgers University and denounced herself from any commitment to communist politics and class consciousness. This one-time leftist demonstrated this

when she endorsed Barack Obama for president. This was expected, as Davis had sold out to the liberal Democratic bosses long time ago.

We contrasted her methods of pandering to her liberal phony-left base with our own understanding that communists need to spread revolutionary ideas among the working class. Those ideas will clearly draw the connections between sexist ideology and inequality and the capitalist system's need to divide workers everywhere for maximum profits.

Claudia Jones, Black women key

We also discussed Claudia Jones' *An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women* (1949). This article detailed the super-exploitation of Black women, and called for more attention to be spent organizing them. Through the discussion we added Black and Latin immigrant women workers to the group of the most exploited in the U.S.

In this article Claudia Jones criticized the Communist Party USA for failing to understand and organize among Black women. She stated that in order for any revolution in the to occur, Black women must play a significant leadership role.

We discussed how our Party upholds this commitment and carries forward Jones' analysis to this day in our emphasis in recruiting and taking leadership from Black and immigrant workers. Given their historical and current status as the most oppressed and exploited section of the international working class, their insights and hatred of capitalism is key to revolution. A movement without Black workers is a failed movement.

Theory leads to struggle

At the study group about Claudia Jones, comrades and friends were inspired to put the theory of organizing into practice. The very next day nursing home workers, 70 percent of whom were Black women, were going on a one-day strike against horrible work conditions (including stripping long-time workers of their seniority) and a fair



Veracare Nursing Home workers on strike

contract. We chatted with workers and distributed CHALLENGE to strikers on the picket line. Our PLP contingent was made of almost entirely of people who had attended the anti-sexism study group. It was a freezing Chicago day, but we knew that staying home was not an option.

The workers may strike again soon if owner Israel Davis fails to cease his illegal labor practices and to bargain a fair contract.

Our second opportunity to put theory into practice came during this year's Women's March. This contingent too was primarily from the study group. We called out the Democratic Party for using sexism as a platform to build their ranks, and promoting the elections—not fightback—as a solution to sexist oppression. We were well received. Many workers, most of whom were women, took flyers and CHALLENGE. Our call to destroy capitalism with communist revolution was met with applause.

Communists belong in the mass struggle

Sexism is a notorious tool used to divide and oppress working-class people. It is used by the bosses to exploit workers on all fronts—men, women, straight, gay, and transgender. And so, it must be fought on all fronts. Through practice we learn how to better fight it, and through theory we learn how to better understand it. Theory and practice are linked, and should never be separated. Understanding this helps us fight for the world workers deserve—a communist one. Join us in this fight.☺

China: pro-worker students arrested—a young Left takes root

Zheng Yongming, a recent university graduate working in Guangzhou, China, wrote an open letter after his arrest in November by Chinese police. He was locked up for organizing a Maoist reading group in a university classroom. Zheng’s letter, which keeps being taken down from various websites by the authorities, only to be reposted, states that “I will always be a son of the workers and peasants.”

He was one of four young people arrested. Hundreds of professors from some of China’s most prestigious colleges signed a letter protesting the arrests, which included graduates of the elite Peking University (Agence Presse-France).

A budding Left in China

This episode provides a glimpse into the situation facing would-be revolutionaries in China today. Western capitalist media frequently report on the difficulties of Chinese dissidents who want to see Western-style political reforms such as competing political parties or greater press freedom. But increasingly those being suppressed by the Chinese government are neo-Maoists and other anti-capitalists referred to as the “new Left” of China.

The ruling capitalists who call themselves the “Chinese Communist Party” (CPC) have waged a campaign for decades to make people forget the Chinese revolution’s original mission, building a communist country. Today there is nothing “communist” about the CPC except the title, which they own. Since the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the government propaganda praising capitalism and re-writing the history of the socialist period, 1949 to 1976, has become more and more direct. People now call those first years after the revolution the “Mao Era.”

The new Left is a mixture of political currents ranging from liberal social democrats to revolutionary-minded Marxist Leninists. Although there is wide agreement among these groups, known mainly through their websites, that China is capi-

talist, there are lots of opinions about how to achieve a more egalitarian society. Most are talking about socialism and envision it in terms of what China had before the death of Mao. There was at least one example of a group that declared themselves to be a new communist party dedicated to establishing socialism in China. The leading members were all arrested at their founding convention in 2015 (Financial Times, 1/11/2016).

Leftist websites are closely watched by authorities and anything that sounds like a serious challenge to the ruling CPC is taken down immediately by state monitors. In fact, in 2012 most of the leftist websites were banned, but others keep appearing.

One site that was still functioning in the period since the Guangzhou arrests is called Chuǎng (chuangcn.org). Its name is the Chinese character meaning “to break free” made up of elements of a horse breaking through a gate. According to them:

On November 15, 2017, police stormed into a student reading group at the Guangdong University of Technology and seized six young participants. Two of them, Zhang Yunfan and Ye Jianke, were held at the Panyu Detention Center for a month as suspects for the crime of ‘gathering crowds to disrupt social order,’ along with two other young people involved with the reading group who were later seized at their residences: Sun Tingting and Zheng Yongming. After prominent intellectuals circulated a petition for Zhang’s release, all four detainees have been released on bail but are still awaiting trial. Four other young leftists connected to the reading group are on a wanted list and still in hiding (chuangcn.org, accessed 1/29/18).

The Chuǎng website posted letters the students wrote after their release. One wrote:

I’d rather follow the Mao that led workers and peasants towards self-emancipation, rather than the Mao printed on banknotes. ... Officers from Xiaoguiwei Police Station

said I was the culprit – the ‘mastermind’ behind some sort of conspiracy! And indeed I was – promoting Maoism and working for the sake of the downtrodden were of course what I ‘premeditated,’ or even ‘plotted over an extended period of time.’ I was born to walk this ‘radical’ path, and I’d rather die than repent.

These young Maoists are part of a growing phenomenon in China. Young university graduates who encounter leftist organizations while students often go to work for non-profits, mostly in the “sun belt” in cities like Guangzhou and Shenzhen where the largest concentration of sweatshops is found.

Fascist crackdown of worker-student alliance

Study circles in which Marxist ideas are discussed by groups of workers and intellectuals appear to be occurring in many places, although such activity is watched closely by the government. Unified organizations between workers and intellectuals are particularly scrutinized. When people step over the line, like showing the solidarity of workers and students, they can expect to hear from the police and “security”. Idealistic college graduates involved in non-profits and attending book clubs about communist politics worry about when they will be “invited to have tea” with the police chief, the standard method of intimidating organizers. But the arrests in November were a new level of crackdown on the radical left.

Communists outside of China, including members of PLP, are encouraged by the dedication of these young organizers. The response of some Chinese workers to the arrest of these students will be reported in a follow-up article.

Development of a new pro-communist movement in a country that was the world’s leader in revolutionary activity in the recent past must be studied seriously by communists everywhere.☸

Syria and Iran editorial

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miles from Israel’s border” (CFR blog, 10/8/17).

Given the ruthless competition created by capitalism, a future world war is inevitable. While the political divisions surrounding Trump’s election has hindered any mobilization of U.S. workers for wider war, there remains significant patriotic sentiment within the U.S.—both in Trump’s base and in the liberal opposition. In any case, global events like the recent crisis between Israel and Syria may soon force the hand of the U.S. rulers to act. However these tensions play out, one thing is for sure: workers can expect more fascism as the bosses prepare for all-out war.

Iran-Russia axis

The Iran-Russia alliance is strengthening by the day. Looking to amplify its role as a regional power, Iran is rapidly expanding its infrastructure, positioning itself as a hub of trans-European trade and plugging into China’s One Belt, One Road initiative (Forbes 8/1/17). In August 2017, with both nations facing U.S. sanctions, Russia and Iran signed a \$2.5 billion deal for the manufacturing of cargo and passenger wagons in Iran. In 2016, overall trade between Iran and Russia doubled, most of it in military contracts.

U.S. attempts to control Iran through sanctions have reduced opportunities for European companies like Total of France, which must obtain U.S. approval before investing. As a result, the sanctions have driven Iran even closer to Russia. Meanwhile, China has upped its military training and assistance to Syria’s army. Along with Russia and Iran, it has scooped up the lion’s share of Syria reconstruction contracts. China and Russia

are leading members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which focuses on economic and counter-terrorism issues; Iran is an SCO partner. “Michael Maloof, a former Pentagon official, noted that China has actually been in Syria ‘for quite some time’.... The latest developments indicate that the U.S. is ‘being basically left out’” (rt.com, 8/17/16).

Workers fight back

As the threat of wider war looms, the imperialist dogfight over Syria has proven a disaster for the region’s working class. After seven years of conflict, the current death toll stands at over 500,000, with nearly 13 million Syrians displaced. As the bosses fight over the spoils of Syria, our working-class brothers and sisters in the Middle East are paying the price.

In the midst of this chaos, the working class is fighting back. Last December, after going four months without pay, workers at the Haft Tapeh sugar cane plantation and mill complex in Shush, Iran, went on strike. In the Iranian city of Arak, hundreds of workers at Hepco, a private industrial complex, recently demanded months of back pay and better living conditions by forming a human chain around the city’s main square (Riyadh Daily, 2/7).

As Iran continues to develop its infrastructure with Russian investments, transit and construction workers in Iran will be essential in fighting back against the rulers’ move toward World War III. We must follow the lead of these workers as their strikes threaten to shut down the bosses’ infrastructure. Armed with the analysis of Progressive Labor Party, they can turn these strikes into a larger class struggle against capitalism and inter-imperialist war.☸

PSC Continues to Fight

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the school’s anti-racist mission.

- After working with an external mediator, a representative group of multiracial PSC staff members formed a committee to rebuild ties within the staff around the school’s mission.
- Nearly a hundred parents and staff members joined together in a multiracial celebration of the school’s victory over the DoE’s disruptive campaign. This event had been delayed because of people’s desire to wait for a more clear-cut resolution and an official end to the DoE’s attacks. Then they went ahead anyway. They have learned that reform victories may be fleeting, but the class struggle never ends—and that’s something to celebrate.

Choosing anti-racism over anti-communism

Many times it seems like this racist monster of a system is too big and difficult to take on by ourselves, but we aren’t meant to do it alone. Communist confidence in the working class is infectious; at PSC, it is carrying the day. It’s also being reciprocated. Several community members have joined weekend CHALLENGE study groups.

Through this and other struggles at PSC over many years, dozens of parents—white, Latin, Asian, and Black—have been won over to defend Black and Latin youth. Many now see that our young people deserve true equity—not only for education resources, but also in being heard as equal partners in the fight for integration. After centuries of building segregation, an essential feature of racism and capitalist exploitation and inequality, nothing scares the U.S. ruling class more than multiracial unity. The DoE’s persistent attack on the PSC community stems from the modest progress it is making in dismantling this crucial aspect of capitalist class rule.

The multiracial unity and courage of PSC students, parents, and teachers is rare and inspiring. Students have been emboldened to take on racist staff members. After the sit-ins, some said it was their duty to fight racism and teach younger students that they need to keep the fightback going. Communists in Progressive Labor Party are proud to be part of this crucial class struggle.☸

Yemen & Middle East wars mean mass terror for workers

The current war in Yemen has created one of the worst capitalist crises the world has seen. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia has been bombing and blockading Yemen into collapse and misery, using billions of dollars of U.S.-supplied weaponry. The U.S. military is also refueling Saudi bombers in flight, to complete their deadly missions.

According to the UN, in this country of 27 million people, more than 10,000 have been killed, more than 2 million have been displaced, about 7 million are on the brink of starvation and 14 million lack access to clean drinking water and sanitation.

Over half a million people are infected with cholera, the largest outbreak in the world in 50 years, and 2,000 have died. Malnutrition has increased the threat of the disease, while massive bombings have targeted water and sanitation facilities, bridges, factories and hospitals. Over 30,000 health workers and many civil servants haven't been paid for over a year.

Yemen, the poorest country in the Middle East, borders Saudi Arabia and the Bab-el-Mandeb—the two-mile strait between Yemen and Africa through which millions of gallons of oil pass each day. In addition, Yemen could have undeveloped oil reserves, perhaps greater than Saudi Arabia.

The Yemeni Houthis of the North, seized power. They are supported by Iran. Saudi Arabia is attempting to prevent the spread of Iran's influence in the region, especially on its border. This war between two regional powers is a reflection of the decline of U.S. imperialism and the growing instability that has engulfed the Middle East, which has the potential for leading to another world war.

You could say, that war has already begun. If you pull the camera back for a larger view of the Middle East and Horn of Africa, you see the U.S., Russian and Chinese imperialists jockeying for power and position in the midst of growing war and a string of failed states. The net effect has been the worst refugee crisis since World War II, 65.6 million people, many from these countries.

Syria: More than 400,000 dead in a 6-year civil war, 11.3 million displaced. Recently, as many as 200 Russian soldiers were killed by U.S. forces, the first direct military contact between the two imperialists since the Vietnam War. All of the major imperialist and regional players are colliding here. The U.S. wants to transport oil from Qatar to Europe. Russia and Assad want to build a pipeline from Iran instead. Syria has been destroyed in the process. China is also increasing its involvement on the side of Assad, providing training to the Syrian military, opposing UN sanctions, and increasing investments in the country.

Iraq: As many as one million civilians have



died since the U.S. invasion in 2003 to try to keep control of the world's third largest supply of oil.

Afghanistan: 27,000 civilians dead, 1.3 million displaced. While not rich in oil, it is a prime pipeline route between the oil and gas rich Central Asian republics and Turkey, Europe, and Asia. After the U.S. invasion, Afghanistan was also found to have deposits of rare minerals necessary for cyber technology. Since the U.S. decreased the number of troops here, China has added troops and increased financing.

Somalia: Civil war, famine, a cholera epidemic and a tsunami have killed or displaced at least 3.5 million Somalis. Somalia also lies along the sea lanes that transport oil and may itself contain huge oil and natural gas deposits.

Sudan/South Sudan: 490,000 displaced; murder, sexual violence and repression are rampant. In the Sudanese civil war, China is supplying arms to the government in order to secure joint exploration and pipeline projects.

Libya: Another failed state, in chaos since Qaddafi was toppled by a NATO-led invasion in 2011. Once the ninth-largest oil producer in the world, exporting mainly to Europe. Russia is now looking to re-open oilfields, build a base on the Mediterranean, or become an international mediator (Foreign Policy 9/14/17).

Gaza: Israel, armed with nuclear weapons and the world's largest recipient of U.S. military aid, is allowed to continue its 50-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza with mass terror. More than 3,500 Palestinians were killed in the last two sieges out of a population of 1.5 million. Currently this "outdoor prison" has become unlivable, with only

two-four hours of electricity a day and 90 percent of its water undrinkable. Health services are broken down due to infrastructure damage and lack of supplies, over 700 schools are inoperable, and waterborne diseases are increasing due to lack of sewage treatment plants.

China, the world's fastest-growing economy, is the number one gas and oil importer from Iran while also selling arms for oil to Saudi Arabia. China is also building oil and gas pipelines from Russia (Foreign Policy, 1/26).

The U.S., in a permanent state of war since 2001, has been either directly at war or arming and supporting regional and local players in all of these conflicts. Like a wounded beast, U.S. imperialism grows more desperate and more dangerous, transcending party politics. Trump's anti-Muslim travel ban, in effect until the case is heard by the Supreme Court, has left Muslim families torn apart by the collapse of the region, with thousands stranded in refugee camps, unable to proceed to the U.S. This anti-Muslim racism is vital to winning the population and soldiers to sacrifice for this new permanent state of war, while Muslims are targeted for government surveillance and victimized by hate crimes.

It wasn't so long ago that the capitalists were celebrating the end of communism and the victory of the free market. These are the fruits of their catastrophic victory. Sooner rather than later, we will all be living in Yemen. The slow but steady rebuilding of the international communist Progressive Labor Party is the long-term solution. The building of international solidarity now can ultimately turn the next world war into the last. ☺

It's not just predator Nassar; sexism integral to Olympics

Sexual predator Larry Nassar abused at least 256 women while he was the medical doctor for USA Gymnastics (USAG) and the Michigan State University Athletic Department. He will spend the rest of his life in prison as Judge Rosemarie Aquilina proclaimed that she was glad to "sign his death warrant." But it's not just Nassar and the many other sexual abusers that are being exposed. The whole damn capitalist system has to go!

Sexism inseparable from Olympics

As doctor for USAG, Nassar travelled to many Olympics with the team. The Olympics are capitalism at its' worst. Money and nationalism rule. Corruption is rampant. At this year's Winter Olympics much of the Russian team was suspended for doping up their athletes with performance enhancing drugs (PEDs). Nassar did his vile abuse at the Summer Olympics, where often young girls are the stars. But it was not just Nassar. "... In 2004, journalist Scott Reid let us know that gymnasts training for Team USA were subjected to near-starvation diets—900 calories per day to fuel a world-class athlete. The purpose of this was to delay the onset of puberty, when the natural development of a woman's body makes her less adapted to acrobatic tumbling" (Washington Post, 1/26).

Though some of the brave women that are coming forward and confronting their abusers are

famous entertainers or athletes, most are working class women who have had very little recourse in a depraved capitalist world. Sexual predators are all over the world because capitalist culture promotes it. The profit motive is primary and this goes beyond sports. Women are particularly vulnerable because of the imperialist wars around the world as capitalists fight to control valuable resources. They make up a huge proportion of refugees worldwide living in deplorable conditions. According to a United Nations report, during the Clinton administration, U.S. bombing of Iraq killed 500,000 women and children. Women are used as sex slaves and their bodies are mutilated in many parts of the world.

Many of Nassar's victims and some journalists express sentiments that point to a systematic failure. Charles Pierce says "Burn it all down" (Sports Illustrated, 1/24). Survivor Kyle Stephens despairs that "I have received messages from survivors all over the world detailing their abuse and isolation... When an Instagram message is the only place that victims can speak their truth, we are failing" (Washington Post, 2/16).

Democratic politicians, no ally of workers

Cynically politicians, mainly Democrats, are

stepping in to coopt this uprising against sexual abuse into a vote for me movement. New York Democratic Senator Kirsten Gillibrand is calling on the Justice Department to investigate the Olympic Committee. Michigan Democrats are calling on Judge Aquilina to run for the Michigan State Supreme Court. But the Democratic Party has been integral to sexual abuse from President Bill Clinton and his intern to Democratic Party donor Harvey Weinstein. It really is the whole damn system that has to go.

So here we are with another Olympics full of divisive nationalism, poisoned by drugs, awash in corruption, and driven by money, a perversion of sports. Sports should be for everyone to have fun and stay healthy. There was a brief glimpse of this in the early days of the Soviet Union and China after their socialist revolutions. There were sports clubs everywhere, often attached to factories. Workers were given time to exercise during work. That was before the restoration of full-blown capitalism in those countries. Now we are facing the ultimate capitalist depravity, world war. Women standing up to each and every sexual predator is a big plus. Let's take the struggle one more step to rebuild a communist movement for a decent, egalitarian world. Then we can build healthy relationships between men and women. ☺

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Honduras: destitution and potential for rebellion

I wanted to write about Honduras, a country where I lived until a few years ago, and where my husband, son, and other relatives still live. I had to leave my home and my family because of the violence and corruption. I wanted to specifically talk about my people, the workers who stand up to raise their voice, tired of the abuse and the exploitation of capitalism. The workers that are unemployed and their children who can hardly get a pair of shoes, and have no access to scholarships, regardless of their ability to succeed or their intellect. Those who don't have the right to decent health, because eight out of ten inhabitants live in extreme poverty. Where children at the age of seven begin to work.

In Honduras, the repression against those who raise their voice is cruel. In order to silence them, the bosses kill some of the workers and force others to migrate, making a dangerous journey through all of Mexico, from one extreme to another. Arriving at the border of the United States and being able to cross with the hope of a better life, only to find that they are exploited there too, having very few belongings and no rights.

But today, those workers have risen, tired of the exploitation and the repression, against a capitalist government and its monopolies. Tired of this corrupt and repressive government and its imperialist allies, who donated four tanks to be used by the U.S. empire to smash the anger of the workers and of the women who never have had a voice but today also are rising with their chants that demand very simple things: dignity, bread, and work.

For this, workers together with youth and students united for the announcement of a national strike with the only objective that their demands be heard. They condemned the government for the repression and death of 34 youth during the demonstrations against the gigantic fraud in the presidential elections. This number is according to government facts; the reality is different because they control media and lie about the numbers of people dead, wounded, or detained.

My son, a revolutionary youth, was convinced that he was necessary to the workers' struggle and that he was fighting for their rights, not for some fraudulent elections that trampled the bosses' constitution. He is also convinced that the solution isn't competition between electoral parties, only collective struggle. He has the conviction of the workers' continuing their fight to build a strike movement, leading to a national strike, and that revolutionary violence can destroy capitalism and imperialism.

The fight will continue, shutting down highways, factories, airports, and schools to strangle capitalism because this collective struggle has awoken the conscience of the working class. Only with revolution are we going to achieve the destruction of capitalism and

imperialism and build a society where each works for the wellbeing of all. We have hope of this society being led by a communist Party, the Progressive Labor Party, which with the entire working class, will take the lead in eliminating private property and creating equality for everyone.

★★★★★

Racist havoc in Puerto Rico

As a resident in Puerto Rico, I witness firsthand the way the local government and the U.S. works together to screws workers. As PR continues its 12-year economic decline with no remedy in sight, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) just stopped handing out water and food, claiming that the PR government can do it. Meanwhile 30 percent of the population is still without electricity.

With corruption and racism rampant, the capitalist politicians fight over money and power, resulting in more misery for workers. The PR government wants a \$4.2 billion loan from FEMA. FEMA refused, claiming that some 800 government bank accounts have been discovered with some 10 billions of dollars. FEMA wants to give the money through the Financial Management and Control Board (popularly known as la Junta with six of the seven members appointed by the U. S. president) while the PR government wants it directly. Both sides are swindlers.

Besides fighting over money, the Junta and the government have the same policy. The new budget, which the Junta has until mid February to approve or reject, calls for more budget cuts, leaving workers with virtually no services. The new budget proposal includes \$53 billion in U.S. aid without indicating where that aid is coming from. Meanwhile Congress and president Trump are ignoring petitions for aid.

The apparent plan to create a cheap, regulation free industrial site, and a tax haven for rich people continues. The trend here is towards privatization—of the Public Electric Authority and the Water Authority, and schools. Three hundreds school have been closed. A newspaper reported that the Police Academy is not functioning and may also be privatized. The government and the Junta fully agree in selling these institutions to private interests.

In San Juan, where I live, there are pockets of commercial activity with some restaurants, a supermarket, and a movie theatre, followed by 10, or even 20 blocks, of desolation.

There are some small community groups around the island doing good work. One in the south is promoting a healthy fishing community, community oriented agriculture and solar energy. Right now, the towns of Guayama, Patillas and Arroyo get energy from a privately-owned coal powered electric generating plant. This plant was built around 2000, long after the entire world knew of the awful effects of coal generation. But of course, the blatant racism of the bosses allows these outdated and toxic measures.

Puerto Rico remains a shining example of the destructiveness of capitalism. It is a showcase for what we can all look forward to in the future if we don't organize and act.

★★★★★

You can't smash the bosses without passing the hat

"Hey have you heard the news? We don't fight to lose. We might need bail or we might need books, but you won't get either with your good looks!"

—"Pass the Hat" by PLP

Great song!

Under capitalism, money is the root of all evil. That's why the Progressive Labor Party wants to abolish the wage system and money with communism.

But we still live under capitalism. We have to print our newspaper and other literature and we need money for bail, lawyers, and assisting comrades in the struggle. Many comrades shy away from asking for donations, but fundraising is necessary and actually helps bring our friends closer to our movement.

Our coworkers and neighbors often give regularly to charities or at church. We need to be on their list. Their donations will make all workers better off more than any charity. We want to make a revolution to destroy capitalism and in the process smash racism, sexism and imperialism!

Here, we have held an annual Thanks-For- Fighting Racism Feast for 32 years. We have raised money for farm workers in Delano, Haitian comrades, Ferguson comrades, the Ragozin Foundation, and the Anaheim 3. We ask for donations, but we mainly sell 50/50 raffle tickets. Many workers buy lottery tickets hoping to win the big one! But we are planting seeds of consciousness and hope to engage our friends in our anti-racist struggles.

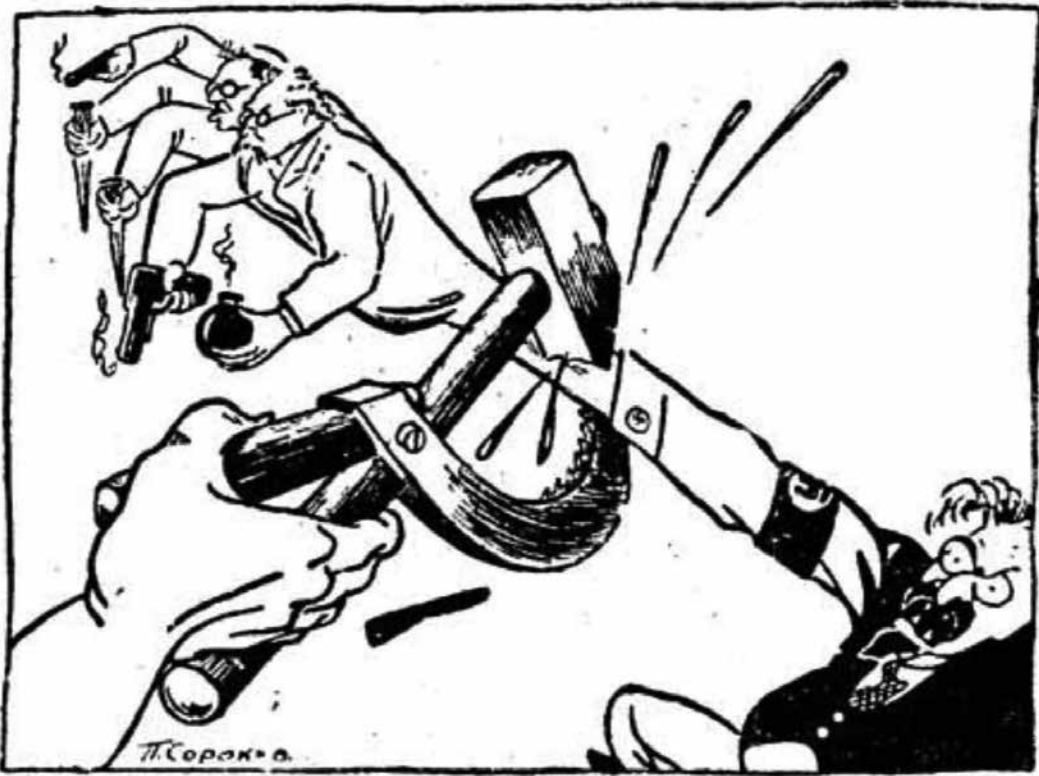
I have regularly sold 90-120 tickets. My coworkers and neighbors know that I am a militant anti-racist fighter. I discuss the various struggles workers were involved in and why the money was needed. I "make the political personal."

This year the money went to the Anaheim 3 Legal Defense Fund. These anti-racists are on trial in California for protesting the Ku Klux Klan. The white supremacists stabbed three people and were never charged. I struggled with one family member from a Unitarian church social justice group to sell raffle tickets. His church was holding an interfaith dinner with a Muslim mosque. He sold \$286 worth of tickets! The winner came from this interfaith dinner, and donated their winnings back to the Legal Defense Fund!

We all must get over our fear of asking for money. We have to be bold. The bosses will never give us money. We can't make a revolution with empty pockets.

★★★★★

New book: Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany & Japan



It's \$25, plus \$5 for shipping and handling. Send your order and a check to Challenge Periodicals, PO Box 808, Brooklyn NY 11202.

The latest book on Leon Trotsky's collaboration with fascists.

At the Moscow Trials of 1937 and 1938, some of Leon Trotsky's followers accused Trotsky of secretly conspiring with Nazi Germany and fascist Japan.

Since Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of 1956 attacking Stalin, these charges have been routinely dismissed as false by Soviet, Russian, and Western historians. But we know now that Khrushchev was lying!

Grover Furr asks the question: What is the evidence that Trotsky conspired with the Germans and Japanese? How should this evidence be analyzed and interpreted? In this book, Furr conducts an objective study of the evidence. He concludes that Trotsky did indeed collaborate with the Germans and Japanese.

The proof that Trotsky was guilty of collaboration with the Nazis and Japanese dramatically changes our understanding of Soviet history of the 1930s and of Joseph Stalin's role.

170th Anniversary

Lessons from The Communist Manifesto

In late 1847, a secret European propaganda society, the Communist League, requested Karl Marx and Frederick Engels to write up a statement of purpose for the organization. In February 1848, the document appeared. It was called the Communist Manifesto.

This work outlines the new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society.

—V.I. Lenin, *Karl Marx* (1913)

In time, the Manifesto became the most revered document among revolutionaries everywhere. After 170 years, we in the Progressive Labor Party still take these words seriously:

“The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains.”

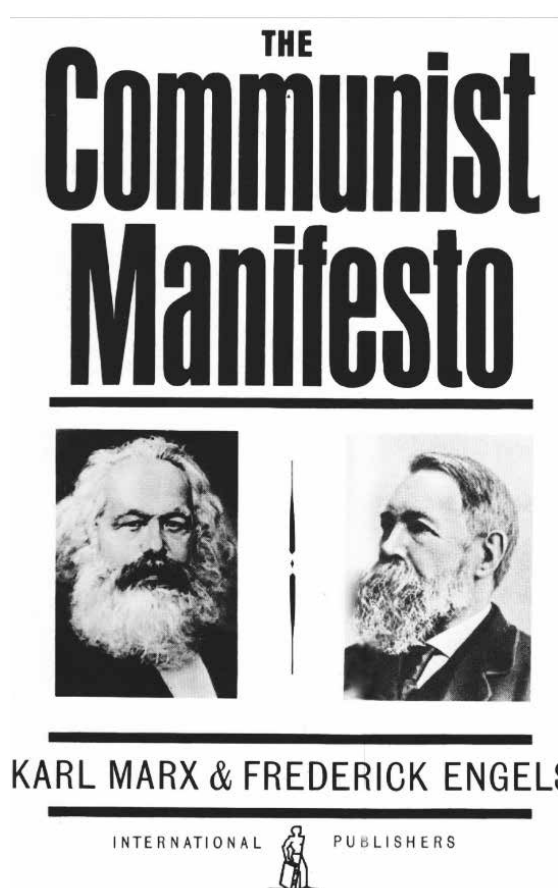
The ruling classes understood the significance of Marxist ideas. We are still grasping its historic importance.

In 1895, Lenin wrote in *Frederick Engels*:

The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself and be conscious of itself, and they substituted science for dreams.

All those who wish to develop as revolutionaries should understand the Communist Manifesto and look at the similarities and differences between the early communists and the PLP. Its main points are these:

(1) Communists should openly “publish their views (and) their aims” to the world. Marx and Engels believed, as do we, that being bold and explicit about communist ideas is the only way to build a



Read *The Communist Manifesto* for free
Available in 80 languages at
<http://bit.ly/2sH9k3o>

movement for communism.

(2) “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” It has been the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed that ultimately leads to the destruction of the oppressors and the progression of history.

(3) However, capitalism has a uniqueness to

it not found before: “Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”

(4) Capitalism has another distinct feature: “It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his ‘natural superiors,’ and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest ...for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.”

(5) But with this more explicit form of exploitation were planted the “seeds of destruction” of the bourgeoisie—the working class: “In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e. capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who work only so long as their labor increases capital.”

(6) Finally, the aim of communists—the issue which separates revolutionaries from pretenders—is “overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat”—the dictatorship of the working class.

As it was only the opening gun for a movement in its infancy, the Manifesto had a few major omissions. Marx and Engels more or less knew the sort of world they wanted—a world led by workers—but hadn’t the slightest idea how to achieve it. This knowledge was to come later, helped out by the brave workers of Paris in 1871 who used mass violence to set up the Paris Commune.

Marx and Engels were very vague on the role of ideology or the hold of bourgeois ideas on the working class. We have since learned that the role of communists is to demolish the bosses’ ideas among workers and students and to develop communist ideas in order to create the revolutionary army that will destroy capitalism. To do that, we need one united party all over the world. Join PLP and turn the words of the Communist Manifesto into actuality.🌐



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Cops commit violent crimes

NYT, 2/7 — Baltimore — Stacks of bills, \$100,000 in all, taken from a safe.

...Bags full of stolen prescription drugs dumped on the black market.

A motorist robbed of \$25,000.

The crimes were...carried out ...by Baltimore police officers....an elite squad...taking every opportunity to rob those who they were supposed to be policing or protecting....

...Their crimes...included selling seized guns and drugs back onto the street, sending innocent people to jail, recruiting civilians to rub drug dealers and using GPS devices to track and rob the innocent....[and] also charges of extortion, using a firearm to commit violent crime and submitting phony overtime claims.

“They were, simply put, both cops and robbers,” said...the...prosecutor....

Momodu Gondo, a former member of the gun unit....estimated that he had stolen...\$100,000 from people during his career and...had given a gun...to a drug dealer....

...Baltimore...has dropped at least 125 criminal cases related to the task force....The public defender’s office estimates that the number of tainted cases is likely closer to 3,000.

The gun unit would...deflect suspicion by lending tactical gear, including bulletproof vests,

to civilians so they could commit robberies. The officers served as lookouts.

The detectives also kept BB guns in their police cars...to plant them on suspects and frequently placed tracking devices on the vehicles of civilians so they could rob their homes....

The crew stole...Rolex watches, dirt bikes, cologne, Air Jordan sneakers, a Chanel purse, heroin, cocaine and prescription drugs.

The unit, whose purpose was to get guns off the street,...stole and sold guns.

Bosses profit from spread of toxic poisons in flood paths

NYT, 2/7 — Anchored in flood-prone areas in every American state are more than 2,500 sites that handle toxic chemicals....

As flood danger grows — the consequence of a warming climate — the risk is...more toxic spills like the one that struck Bayonne, Texas, where Hurricane Harvey swamped a chemicals plant, releasing lye. Or...at a Florida fertilizer plant that leaked phosphoric acid and an Ohio refinery that released benzene....

...Rising sea levels combined with more frequent and extensive flooding from coastal storms like hurricanes may increase the risk to chemical facilities near waterways....

...More than 21,600 facilities across the country...handle large amounts of toxic chemicals harmful to health and the environment....

...The list does not include...wastewater facilities or chemical sites where the predominant risks are fire or explosion, as opposed to toxic pollution....

By the time the murky floodwaters had receded from the sprawling Chevron Phillips chemical plant in Baytown, 34,000 pounds of sodium hydroxide and 300 pounds of benzene — both highly toxic — had escaped....The plant, a joint venture between Chevron and Phillips 66, is one of many that filled the region’s streets with a stew of chemicals, debris and waste in the days after Hurricane Harvey....

...The vulnerability of America’s coastal industries to rising sea levels and extreme weather...is the case along the Gulf Coast because the country’s oil, gas and petrochemicals industries are concentrated there....

But even as flooding risks increase, chemical companies continue to build in vulnerable areas.

Trump’s racism squeezes Puerto Rico’s hurricane victims

NYT, 2/9/18 — Puerto Rican officials have for months denounced the federal government’s response to Hurricane Maria, urging for more attention and action to help the island’s hard-pressed storm survivors....

...The funding falls tens of billions of dollars short of what Puerto Rico...needs to come back from the devastating storm....

Puerto Rico wanted \$17 billion for the power grid alone — \$15 billion more than what the Senate set aside. By comparison, Florida’s citrus industry is receiving \$2.3 billion to recover from Hurricane Irma....

Twenty-eight percent of Puerto Ricans — more than 400,000 utility customers — still do not have power more than four months after Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico.

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL SERIES

THE SOVIET UNION CRUSHED FASCISM.
CAPITALIST LIES ABOUT WORLD WAR II

This celebratory column is in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the world communist movement of the 20th century. We mainly examine its triumphs. We welcome your comments and criticisms, and encourage all readers to discuss this period of history with their friends, classmates, co-workers, family, and comrades.

The international working class led by the Soviet Union crushed fascism during World War II, a great achievement. Capitalist rulers lie about it, hiding the key role of the workers and communist leadership in that victory. We reject those lies.

Lie No. 1: British, French and U.S. Capitalists ("Allies") Always Opposed Hitler

Actually, they supported and aided Hitler until the last moment.

Starting with Hitler's rule in 1933, U.S. and British leaders ignored Nazi murders of Jewish people.

Britain, France and the U.S. appeased Hitler, hoping he'd attack the USSR. They allowed Hitler to re-arm. They gave him Czechoslovakia in 1938. They routed Foreign money to Germany through the London Exchange. Right before the war in September, 1939, Germany bought twice its monthly requirement of rubber from the London Rubber Exchange.

Even after war started, Germany got oil via Italy and American cotton via Switzerland.

From 1935-1939, France and Britain rejected five Soviet proposals to ally against Hitler. Finally, the Soviets made a pact with the Nazis, hoping to gain time preparing for the Nazi attack.

In post-war testimony, Nazi General Jodl said, "the German Army...(won) the Polish campaign [September, 1939] because 110 French and British divisions facing 29 German divisions...did nothing."

France's pro-Nazi high command surrendered. As the Germans approached Paris, 20 French divisions remained in Syria, just to threaten Soviet Central Asia. French soldiers trying to bury arms for resistance were ordered to give them to the Nazis.

British, French and U.S. rulers supported fascism. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), Britain, France and the U.S. helped fascist General Franco by blocking supplies for the anti-fascist Spanish government. Franco got oil from Texaco, 12,000 automobiles from Ford and GM, and military support from Germany and Italy.

While capitalists gave Spain to the fascists, the working class recruited volunteers to the International Brigades to fight Franco. Communists and leftists from 53 countries joined these Brigades. Many died for the cause.

After war was declared, the U.S. and UK lent money to Hitler's allies Spain and Italy.

If the Nazis had merely terrorized workers and attacked the USSR, the British-French-U.S. capitalists would have left them alone. These capitalists, before, during, and after World War II, supported dozens of fascists and mass murderers, from Chile to Indonesia.

But Hitler grabbed Poland, Holland, Belgium and France. Then the capitalist Allies had to fight Hitler—but not because they opposed fascism. Britain fought for its colonial empire. The U.S. fought to control the Pacific



poster reads: Death to the fascist monster

and to become the largest capitalist power.

Lie No. 2: The U.S. And Britain Defeated Hitler, With Little Help from the USSR

Actually, it was the Soviet Red Army and communist-led partisans from France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, China, Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines that defeated the German-Italian-Japanese Fascist Axis.

Hitler attacked the USSR on June 22, 1941 with 270 divisions—3,600,000 soldiers. (Hitler took France with only 50 divisions). Nazis overran one-third of Soviet land. But the Red Army fought heroically until victory.

In 1941, Nazis surrounded Leningrad. Hitler ordered the birthplace of Bolshevism utterly destroyed. Leningraders starved under a 900-day siege; but under communist leadership, they never surrendered.

By October 1941, the Nazis approached Moscow; they could see the Kremlin. When the Soviet leadership decided to stay in the city, the entire population rose in defense. Civilians joined militias. Women, men, young and old dug anti-tank ditches in freezing weather. After exhausting the Fascists, the Soviets counter-attacked, pushing the enemy back 100 miles--the Nazis' first defeat.

At Stalingrad, outnumbered and outgunned, Soviets fought house-to-house. Workers defended their communist society, voluntarily remaining in their factories making tanks as bombs fell. If ever an example is needed of communist spirit, it is Stalingrad. The defenders' courage, determination and camaraderie represents what's best in humanity.

Stalingrad also showed the brilliant planning and strategy of the Soviet High Command headed by Stalin. The Soviets surrounded and destroyed three fascist armies, causing 1.5 million Nazi casualties.

The war raged for another three years, until the Red Army took Berlin on May 5, 1945. (See Alexander Werth's books *Russia at War* and *Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*).

In November, 1942, out of 256 German divisions, 172 fought the Red Army. Meanwhile the British engaged only four German divisions in North Africa. In the Normandy landing, the Allies faced only a few Nazi divisions, because 100 Nazi divisions were rushed to Byelorussia and the Ukraine where the Red Army was winning.

From 1941-1944, while the Red Army killed fascists, the U.S. and British waited until the Nazis weakened the USSR. They delayed the Second Front till 1944 when the Nazis were in full retreat from the Red Army. Without a Second Front, the Soviets could have liberated all Europe. The real purpose of the Second Front was to stop Communism in western Europe.

The Nazis concentrated their main forces against the USSR, knowing they'd be treated better by the U.S. than by the Soviets. They were correct. Except for a few top Nazis, all the Nazi officials, the fascist butchers, were kept in the German bureaucracy under U.S. and British control. And German capitalists, Krupp, Siemens, DeutscheBank, who profited by building armaments and selling gas chambers for concentration camps, were untouched during and after the war, and the U.S. quickly opened its markets to them.

Besides the Red Army, the other force which destroyed the fascists were partisans. Italian Communist partisans liberated Milan, Turin, Padua, Bologna and Genoa before the U.S. and British arrived. On April 27, 1945, they captured Mussolini and 18 top fascists, and executed them. Soviet partisans behind German lines destroyed a million fascist troops, more than were killed by all U.S. and British forces.

Communist partisans liberated Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia. In northern Italy, 23 German and four Italian divisions were fighting partisans; in Yugoslavia, partisans faced 24 German, nine Bulgarian and three Hungarian divisions; Greek partisans opposed 10 divisions. Communists and others organized strikes and sabotage in Italy, France and even Germany.✱

Join us next issue as we debunk eight more myths about World War II.

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